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ABSTRACT

This testimony summarizes the results of the Rand Corporation's change agent study of educational innovations funded by federal programs. The second section consists of policy recommendations for ESEA Title IV Consolidated Programs, Part C. The study aimed to help improve federal policies by describing how the process of innovation and educational change works in its local setting and by trying to discern what factors affect the innovative process and its outcomes. After investigating federal program implementation in school districts, the researchers concluded that while federal change agent policies had a major effect in stimulating local districts to undertake projects consistent with federal guidelines, the adopting of these projects did not ensure successful implementation climate or long-run continuation. Local forces (organizational climate and leadership, district management, district politics) intruded to alter proposed innovations and in many cases to curtail their continuation beyond the expiration of federal funds. The researchers recommend changes in the administration of Title IV funds to take into account local factors. (Author/DS)

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Congressional Testimony on Educational Innovations

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Testimony to the Subcommittee
on Elementary, Secondary and
Vocational Education
Committee on Education and Labor
U.S. House of Representatives

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July 28, 1977

This paper was submitted to the Subcommittee on Elementary, Secondary, and Vocational Education, Committee on Education and Labor, U.S. House of Representatives for its hearings on the reauthorization of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act, Title IV. The first section submitted on July 28, 1977, consists of a summary of findings of Rand's change agent study of educational innovations funded by federal programs. The second section, submitted on August 10, 1977, consists of policy recommendations for ESEA, Title IV Consolidated Programs, Part C. Both sections, along with additional oral testimony, will appear in the Congressional Record of the hearings.

PART I

In July 1973, the U.S. Office of Education (USOE) awarded a contract to The Rand Corporation to study a national sample of educational innovations funded by federal programs. The study aimed to help improve federal change agent policies by describing how the process of innovation works in its local setting, and by trying to discern what factors affect the innovative process and its outcomes.

This testimony summarizes findings from Rand's research.* The views and conclusions expressed are those of the testimony's author and should not be interpreted as representing those of The Rand Corporation or any of the agencies sponsoring its research. Although the research included four different federal programs, the following discussion will focus on findings for the Elementary and Secondary Education Act, Title III, Innovative Projects, which has now become Title IV C.

STUDY DESIGN

The Rand study was conducted in two phases. The first phase (July 1973 to July 1975) studied local innovations during their last or next to last year of funding by federal change agent programs, and the research focused on the initiation and implementation of these local projects. Four federal programs were identified by USOE to be included in Phase I of the study: Elementary and Secondary Education Act Title III, Innovative Projects; Elementary and Secondary Education Act Title VII, Bilingual Projects; Vocational Education Act, 1968 Amendments, Part D, Exemplary Programs; and Right to Read.** Despite differences in focus and

*The study's findings are reported in eight volumes under the general title Federal Programs Supporting Educational Change (R-1589-HEW). The appendix describes the contents of these volumes.

**In FY1974, the year of the major research activities of Phase I of this study, the approximate funding levels of the federal programs were: ESEA Title III, Innovative Projects, $150 million; ESEA Title VII, Bilingual Projects $45 million; Vocational Education Act, 1968 Amendments, Part D Exemplary Programs, $16 million; and Right to Read, $12 million. Since these programs have evolved since 1974 (e.g., Title III has become consolidated into Title IV under the 1974 Amendments to ESEA), the discussion in this testimony refers to the programs as they existed during the time when the project studied had federal funds.

management strategy, these change agent programs had a common purpose: the stimulation and spread of educational innovations. They also had a common policy instrument: the provision of temporary funds (3 to 5 years) which, although small relative to the budget of a school district, were intended to fund new educational services, not to support existing practice. Because we studied four programs rather than one, we were able to compare the initiation and implementation of approximately three hundred projects funded by the different programs.

Phase II (August 1975 - April 1977) examined what happened to innovative projects after the end of the federal funding period. Accordingly, two years after the initial field research, Rand restudied a sample of approximately 100 of the projects, originally funded under Title III of ESEA. By thus studying local innovations one to two years after the end of federal funding, we were able to explore the longer run effects of the federal policy of providing "seed money" as a means to promote educational reform.

THE FINDINGS

Our overall findings can be stated quite simply. Federal change agent policies had a major effect in stimulating local districts to undertake projects that were generally consistent with federal categorical guidelines. This local response resulted from the availability of federal funds and, in some programs, from guidelines that encouraged specific educational practices. But the adoption of projects did not insure successful implementation; moreover, successful implementation did not guarantee long-run continuation. Neither those policies unique to each federal program nor those policies common to all of them strongly influenced the fate of the innovations that had been adopted by the districts. In sum, the net return to the federal investment was the adoption of many innovations, the successful implementation of few, and the long-run continuation of still fewer (with the exception of the special case of bilingual projects, where federal and state funding continues to be available).

All the federal programs funded projects that were implemented successfully, as well as projects that were dismal failures and many projects in between. The difference between success and failure depended primarily on how school districts implemented their projects, not on the type of federal sponsorship. The guidelines and management strategies of the federal change agent programs were simply overshadowed by local concerns and characteristics.

The dominance of local factors is also illustrated by the ineffectiveness of a main policy instrument of these "seed" money programs--namely, the size of the grant. The projects in our sample varied considerably in their level of funding, from ten thousand to several hundred thousand dollars per year. The larger grants tended, not surprisingly, to be awarded to larger districts, to fund projects in a greater number of schools, or to fund projects that spent more money per student. The larger grants also tended to support educational methods that focused on individualization techniques. In this case, federal funds typically were used to hire the teacher aides necessary for individualizing classroom activities. By and large, however, more expensive projects were no more likely than less expensive ones to be implemented effectively or to lead to changes in teachers' behavior. More money did not necessarily purchase those things that mattered; it did not "buy," for example, more committed teachers, more effective project directors, more concerned principals, and so on. In other words, project outcomes reflected not the amount of funds, but what the local staff did with them.

This is not to say that "federal money doesn't matter." Federal seed money allowed some districts to undertake activities that their staff were anxious to pursue but that could not be supported out of district funds. Yet, the record of the way school districts used federal grants is spotty. Many projects were started simply for the purpose of receiving federal largesse and, as far as we could tell, without any real intention to deal with central, or even not so central, local problems. The result of this behavior, which we call <u>opportunism</u>, was predictable: opportunistic projects were poorly implemented and disappeared with the last federal check.

Projects taken seriously by district officials and school staff generally were more likely to be implemented than opportunistic projects. But even effective implementation did not always mean that the longer term federal objective of promoting stable change in local practices was achieved. At the end of federal funding, district officials had to decide about the continuation of a change agent project. This decision was not made primarily on the basis of the project's educational success during the period of special funding, as a "seed money" model assumes. Instead, local organizational and political factors moderated and determined the district's commitment to continue change agent projects, even if the project had demonstrated its value.

Moreover, few districts in our sample planned for the long-term stability of projects. The end of federal funding generally resulted in a reduction of resources for most projects, particularly expensive ones. For example, innovations that had used "soft" money to reduce the student-to-adult ratio (e.g., by hiring aides) were cut back to live within the district budget. Many districts complained of insufficient resources to carry on project activities or to permanently fund extra project staff. But financial difficulties usually involved questions of budget allocations that could have been foreseen and planned for from the project's inception. Instead, budget and personnel decisions typically perpetuated the "special project" status of innovations and left them vulnerable to the financial and political fortunes of the district.

Thus, few districts adequately prepared themselves for sustaining or spreading the changes resulting from even successfully implemented projects. This created an anomalous situation. Except for opportunistic or peripheral projects that essentially were not implemented, the methods or materials of most innovations in our sample were still being used to some extent by teachers two years after the end of federal funding; yet, in most cases, the project's continued use in the classroom was not matched by permanent changes in district procedures in budget, personnel, staff support, and instructional areas that would be required to maintain classroom practices. The prognosis for the continued existence of these projects was poor. In most cases, the innovations funded by federal "seed money" had not taken root.

In summary, our findings cast serious doubt on the efficacy of providing seed money to promote educational reform. Seed money does stimulate school districts to adopt innovations. But it assures neither successful implementation nor long-run continuation, because these difficult and uncertain processes depend on the characteristics of school districts and the choices made by them. The prospects for more effective policy would seem to lie in understanding these local processes and the factors within and outside of the district that affect them.

FACTORS AFFECTING PROJECT OUTCOMES

The very complexity of the innovative process teaches us an obvious, though often ignored, lesson: No simple or sure way can be found to effect educational change and have it persist. Nor is any single factor the answer to successful innovation, whether it be money, a new technique or a change in personnel. Rather, the fate of an innovation depends on the complex interplay among characteristics of the innovative project itself and the institutional setting it seeks to change. From these many characteristics, we sought to find out which ones had systematic and significant effects on implementation and continuation across a wide variety of projects and settings.

More specifically, we considered project outcomes to depend on two classes of factors in addition to federal policies:

- Project characteristics (educational method, project resources, scope of proposed change, implementation strategies)
- Institutional setting (organizational climate and leadership, school and teacher characteristics, district management capacity and support)

The remainder of this testimony discusses how much each factor influenced what happened to local innovations.

Educational Methods

School people rarely adopt an innovation from outside their district without changing it. Whether they wish to "replicate" a specific

project they saw or heard about elsewhere, or to apply a general educational concept such as differentiated staffing, project designers tend at the beginning to adapt the innovation to the local setting as well as to their own interests. For example, a mastery learning project that was successful elsewhere may use materials that are not appropriate for the staff or students of the adopting district. Or, district staff may like the reading instruction strategies of one project, but prefer to use the classroom organization methods of another. Moreover, during project implementation, teachers tend to adapt the project's original design to their own needs and to the conditions of their classroom. These local adaptations mean that projects based on essentially the same educational methods can be, and usually are, implemented very differently and thus more-or-less effectively. Consequently, the specific educational method chosen by a school district did not accurately forecast the project's outcomes. In short, what the project was mattered less than how it was done.

Project Resources

Our findings about the effects of project resources are similar to those for educational methods: more expensive projects were generally no more likely than less expensive ones to be effectively implemented, elicit teacher change, improve student performance, or be continued by teachers. Nor did variations in the number of project schools per district or in the funding per student strongly affect project outcomes in most cases.

Scope of Proposed Change

The scope of a change agent project--how much it seeks to accomplish relative to its setting--concerns local officials as well as federal and state planners. Should ambitious and comprehensive innovations be supported, despite a possible high risk of producing no change at all, or should narrow, presumably "safer" bets be backed? Our analysis shows that this question does indeed deserve serious attention, because the project's scope influenced implementation and continuation in many

ways. Though we did find more difficulties associated with more ambitious efforts, the question has a deceptively simple answer: Little ventured, nothing gained.

Our data indicate that teachers rise to challenges. Ambitious and demanding innovations seem more likely to elicit the commitment of teachers than routine projects. They do so in part because they appeal to the teachers' professionalism; that is, a primary motivation for teachers to undertake the extra work and disruption of attempting change is the belief that they will become "better" teachers and that their students will benefit.

In summary, ambitious and demanding innovations promoted teacher change and teacher continuation of project methods without necessarily causing unmanageable implementation problems or diminishing gains in student performance. Teachers must clearly understand these project's goals and precepts; such clarity ordinarily comes during implementation. We doubt whether projects aiming at significant change could be effectively implemented across the whole school system at once. A wiser strategy would probably be to go step by step, so that each school or group or schools can pass its particular threshold of change before new changes are attempted.

Implementation Strategies

In terms of policy import, a major finding of this study involves implementation strategies--the local decisions and choices, explicit or implicit, on how to put an innovation into practice. We found that these strategies could spell the difference between success or failure, almost independently of the type of innovation or educational method involved; moreover, they could determine whether teachers would assimilate and continue using project methods or allow them to fall into disuse. Implementation strategies should be particularly important to policymakers, even though such elements of the institutional setting as school

leadership and teacher characteristics had even greater effects on the project's fate; while there may be no direct leverage on the institutional setting, policy instruments might be formulated that could influence the choice of implementation strategies.

The following strategies were particularly effective in helping teachers to implement and continue project activities:

- Concrete and extended training
- Classroom assistance from project or district staff
- Observation of projects in other classrooms, schools, or districts
- Regular project meetings
- Teacher participation in project decisions
- Local materials development
- Principal participation in training

Institutional Setting

An innovation's local institutional setting had the major influence on its outcomes. Three factors were particularly crucial--school and project leadership, teacher characteristics, and school district management capacity.

Our data leave little doubt that the leadership of the project director and school principal greatly affected implementation and continuation. A skillful project director was able to facilitate effective implementation and build teacher commitment and support and thus increase the possibility that teachers would assimilate and continue project features. The principal's support was most crucial to project continuation. The districts examined in the study sample often took a laissez-faire attitude toward the project after the conclusion of the federal grant, thus it was up to the principal to "fight" for the project and protect it from financial, personnel, and political problems that would lead to its termination. All told, the school principal amply merits the title of "gatekeeper of change."

The characteristics of teachers had great weight on both the short-run and long-run effects of projects. Teachers have to be flexible to master new techniques, as well as being committed to them. We found that the more years of being on the job, the less susceptible to change teachers seemed to be. More important than years of teaching, however, was the teachers' attitudes about their own professional competence: teachers who felt they could help even the most difficult student seemed to be more flexible and open to change.

Districts differ sharply in their capacity to manage change agent projects and in their receptivity towards them. The study found that the constant and active support of school district officials and specialized staff are essential to the project's short-run outcomes and especially its long-run fate.

For example, supportive districts designed continuation strategies from the project's onset that were aimed at maintaining the project in the face of financial, personnel, and political uncertainties. The exact nature of these continuation strategies (as well as their effectiveness) depended on the particular attributes of the local setting, but the broad outlines of their objectives can be seen.

They aimed to smooth the project's transition from its "special status to its institutionalization (i.e., to becoming a regular part of district operations). In the budget area, the project had to change its status from a special line item to a standard activity absorbed in the district's operating budget. "Political" groundwork typically had to be laid to convince school board members of the project's priority. In the personnel area, a procedure for replacing key project personnel had to be established; for example, some LEAs use project participants as "training cadre." In the area of curriculum support, staff training and development needs had to be incorporated into regular in-service activities if new project members were to be "brought on board" and older ones kept fresh. In the instructional area, projects had to replace existing

practices; this meant that district officials once again had to mobilize the support of principals and teachers.

In summary, from beginning to end, a supportive institutional environment was necessary for a project to be effectively implemented and to take root.

CONCLUSIONS

1. Federal change agent policies stimulated the adoption of innovations consistent with federal priorities, but neither those policies unique to each federal program nor those policies common to them strongly influenced the fate of adopted innovations.
2. Neither the resources available to a project nor its educational method greatly affected the project's outcome or continuation. Inputs to school districts, whether money, new methods, or federal guidelines, mattered less than other local factors.
3. Ambitious and demanding innovations promoted teacher change and teacher continuation of project methods without necessarily causing unmanageable implementation problems.
4. Locally chosen implementation strategies strongly influenced both the project's short-run outcomes and its longer-run fate.
5. Leadership of principals and project directors was a vital factor at both the school and the project level.
6. Teachers' commitment and positive attitudes toward their own professional competence enhanced implementation and continuation, whereas many years in teaching had negative effects.
7. A supportive district environment seems necessary for an innovation to be effectively implemented and sustained.

APPENDIX

The findings of Rand's study of change agent projects are reported in eight volumes under the general title Federal Programs Supporting Educational Change (R-1589-HEW). A series of five reports describes the results of the first phase of the research:

Volume I (R-1589/1-HEW, A Model of Educational Change) provides a theoretical perspective for the Rand study by analyzing the current state of knowledge of planned change in education and by proposing a conceptual model of factors affecting change processes within school districts.

Volume II (R-1589/2-HEW, Factors Affecting Change Agent Projects) contains the analysis of survey data collected from a national sample of 293 projects in 18 states during November and December 1973.

Volume III (R-1589/3-HEW, The Process of Change) summarizes the findings and policy implications resulting from 29 case studies of change agent projects conducted by Rand staff members and consultants in 25 school districts during April and May 1974. These case studies were chosen from the original sample of 293 projects initially surveyed. Volume III also describes the role of state education agencies in selecting, managing, and disseminating the change agent projects.

Four technical appendixes to Vol. III describe in detail the federal program management approach, state education agency participation, and case studies for each of the programs in the study: Title III, App. A; Reading, App. B; Bilingual Education, App. C; and Career Education, App. D. Appendix A should be of particular interest to researchers or practitioners concerned with the introduction of new approaches to classroom instruction.

Volume IV (R-1589/4-HEW, The Findings in Review) summarizes the findings of Vols. I, II, and III, and also synthesizes extensive data collected by Rand on federal-level program strategy and management for each of the change agent programs. Volume IV also includes a discussion of alternative federal strategies for promoting innovation.

Volume V (R-1589/5-HEW, Executive Summary) summarizes the first phase of the research for a general audience.

The results of the final phase are reported in three volumes:

Volume VI (R-1589/6-HEW, Implementing and Sustaining Title VII Bilingual Projects), discusses the complex process of establishing bilingual programs in local school districts, with particular attention given to those aspects of the Title VII program and to those political influences that affect local implementation. The fieldwork, viewpoint, and data interpretation build on the extensive empirical work done in the first phase of the study and reported in Vol. III, App. C (Innovations in Bilingual Education, R-1589/3-HEW).

Volume VII (R-1589/7-HEW, Factors Affecting Implementation and Continuation) presents an analysis of the survey data collected in 100 Title III projects in 20 states. This volume deals specifically with the questions of implementing, sustaining, and spreading part or all of special project strategies after federal support ends.

Volume VIII (R-1589/8-HEW, Implementing and Sustaining Innovations) summarizes the findings from both phases of the study and, drawing on these results, describes the process of change at the local level--initiating, implementing, sustaining, and spreading innovative projects. Volume VIII also includes a discussion of policy implications that derive from this study.

PART II

In July 1973, the U.S. Office of Education awarded a contract to The Rand Corporation to conduct a four-year study of a national sample of educational innovations funded by federal programs. The study's findings were reviewed in both written and oral testimony delivered to the Subcommittee on Elementary, Secondary, and Vocational Education on July 28, 1977. Based on these findings, this testimony offers policy recommendations relevant to the ESEA Title IV Consolidation Programs. The views and conclusions expressed are those of the testimony's authors and should not be interpreted as representing those of The Rand Corporation or any of the agencies sponsoring its research.

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

Before making policy recommendations, the following three main findings summarize our previous testimony:

1. Federal change agent policies had a major effect in stimulating local districts to undertake projects that were generally consistent with federal categorical guidelines. This local response resulted from the availability of federal funds and, in some programs, from guidelines that encouraged specific educational practices.

   However, school districts often did not or could not carry out the adopted innovations in ways that improved local educational practice. We call this the implementation problem. Moreover, even when school districts overcame implementation difficulties and successfully implemented their projects, they often did not continue them after the end of federal funding. In sum, the net return to the federal investment was the adoption of many innovations, the successful implementation of few, and the long-run effective continuation of still fewer (with the exception of the special case of bilingual projects, where federal and state funding continues to be available).

2. Federal or state assistance (money, technology, or information) to school districts can have only a marginal effect on the short and longrun outcomes of local innovative efforts because such assistance has limited leverage on how successfully local projects are implemented and sustained. Successful educational change required effective local leadership (particularly from principals and project directors), competent and committed teachers, and school district officials with highly developed management skills. Only ambitious and demanding innovations were likely to produce teacher change and longrun improvement in educational practices.
3. Few school districts have the management skills, motivations, and institutional capacity to implement or sustain planned change. To improve educational practices, they need discretionary resources, technical assistance, support for leadership training and staff development, and federal and state guidance to help choose among competing local priorities.

POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Title IV C provides much needed discretionary funds to school districts for innovative efforts and should be continued. The main effect of federal "seed" money programs has been to stimulate the adoption of local innovations which occurred, in part, because these outside funds were not obligated to pay for existing district operations. Title IV C is one of the few programs that provide school districts with discretionary resources and, more importantly, with a legitimate charter to improve their educational practices. The importance of this program for promoting improvement may increase because of the current trend of relatively tight local financial conditions and declining student enrollments.

The consolidation of innovative programs holds the promise of promoting greater efficiency and flexibility in the use of special project funds at the local level. However, to realize this promise, school districts should be encouraged to "consolidate" the various support activities that accompany special projects. For example, evaluation, planning, staff assistance, and staff training are often conducted for each special project independent of other projects; these services could be delivered more efficiently if LEAs offered consolidated services for all special projects.

2. States should award Title IV C funds to local school districts on a competitive basis but within a framework of targeted federal or state priorities. The competitive aspect of the Title IV C program helps to insure a genuine local interest and effort in a proposed innovative undertaking. There are, however, three disadvantages to a fully competitive system. First, some school districts have become proficient at "grantsmanship," which allows them to win awards opportunistically without a commitment to solving local problems; recommendation 3, below, addresses this difficulty by suggesting a grant system that encourages planning and commitment. Second, a competitive system tends to favor school districts that have more developed management skills and thus are relatively less in need of special project funds. The existing Title IV legislation recognizes this problem and encourages states to make a special effort to reach out to the less competitive LEAs so that they can develop the skills to receive a Title IV C grant. However, the inability of these school districts to compete is often symptomatic of a more general deficiency. They typically lack management skills and staff development capabilities, so that they would have great difficulty implementing improved educational practices even if they were to receive a Title IV C grant. (For these reasons, recommendation 4 suggests a different type of grant to supplement the usual competitive award.)

Third, the local projects awarded under a competitive system may serve neither federal or state priorities, nor even local needs. Assuming that consolidation keeps the reporting, evaluation, and accounting procedures to a minimum, local officials who are really interested in

improving educational practice would value categorical provisions in federal or state funds: categorical grants give them a mandate and legitimacy to mobilize support for special needs within their community and school system. Many district officials have told us, for example, that if Title I funds were not earmarked for compensatory purposes, it would be difficult to sustain compensatory programs in the face of powerful pressures within the district for access to those resources. In short, the priorities set by categorical programs can serve to catalyze local (and state) commitment when the local time is ripe.

Therefore, we suggest that a fixed proportion of funds awarded by the states under Title IV C be allocated to targeted areas (e.g., basic skills, drop-out prevention, or early childhood education). Many states currently use this targeted approach, so that the intent of this recommendation is primarily to spread a practice that has proven effective in several states. Because the conditions and problems differ for each state, the fixed proportion as well as the specific categories should be allowed to vary from state to state and should be submitted by the states in their State Plans to the Office of Education for approval and/or adjustment. Such approval would enable OE to exercise a limited leverage on priorities selected by the states.

3. States should key their awards of Title IV C funds to the natural stages of the local innovative process by awarding three types of grants--a planning grant of one year duration, an implementation grant of two to three years duration, and an incorporation grant of two years duration. Federal change agent programs generally award fixed-term grants regardless of the school district's ability to introduce and sustain the particular innovations represented in their proposals. Yet we observed similar innovations being approached and installed very differently by school districts according to their capacities to innovate. For example, one district attempting to initiate a remedial mathematics project based on Piagetian principals was struggling to operationalize the philosophical principles of the project; another district funded at the same time and

at an equivalent level was dealing with the project at a higher developmental level--it had refined the philosophical principles to meet local needs and was in the process of producing classroom materials. When the three-year federal grant ran out, the project participants in the first district had learned to deal with the innovation but the district could not afford to continue it; the other district had used the federal money to begin district-wide dissemination.

These situations are but two of the many cases pointing to the need for a differential funding strategy. Rather than blanket awards for a fixed number of years, states could award grants according to whether a school district is initiating a new project, implementing an already planned project design, or incorporating within the district a project that the district has successfully implemented on a limited, trial basis.

The award to initiate a new project would be a planning grant of one year duration whose purpose would be twofold. One, the planning grant would allow districts to produce a proposal that satisfied a number of state determined criteria (e.g., problem identification, needs assessment, and personnel assignment). Two, it would enable districts to engage in a planning process that encouraged participation from different levels in the local school system. (Research has suggested that such participation may be critical to successful innovations.) If a school district sought a follow-on grant, it would be required to show State Educational Agency (SEA) evaluators that its planning process involved broad participation.

The award for project implementation would provide resources for up to three years for districts to carry out new educational practices. Although this grant would be similar to the present Title IV C award, it would be preceded by the planning grant process, which would allow SEA personnel to provide formative input to LEAs about implementation. Research has shown that the strategies chosen to implement a project can be pivotal for the project's success; SEA personnel could provide useful and tailored advice to local implementors on appropriate strategies.

The need for a project incorporation grant of up to two years arises because financial considerations often limit a school district's

ability to sustain or spread even successful innovations after the end of the federal funding period. However, in addition to financial considerations, we found that unless the school district was committed to make the new educational practice a standard part of district operations, the project would eventually fade away, regardless of its past success or staff interest. To help insure the district's commitment, states should (a) require matching grants from LEAs and/or (b) establish on-site visits of SEA personnel prior to the award of an incorporation grant to evaluate district plans and purposes as well as to offer advice.

The above differential funding strategy implies additional administrative costs and increased technical assistance burden for SEAs. To allow the states to fulfill these responsibilities, we recommend that (a) the SEA entitlement to administer Title IV be increased from the present level of 5 percent to 7-1/2 percent and that (b) States be required to allocate up to 2-1/2 percent of their non-administrative Title IV funds to strengthen their leadership resources (as stipulated in Sec. 431) with the percentage commitment in each case to be submitted by the States in their State Plans to the Office of Education for approval and/or adjustment.

4. States should allocate no less than 10 percent of their Title IV C funds to leadership training and staff development activities of local school districts. The Rand study found that innovative projects were not effectively implemented unless (a) they received a high level of leadership from principals and project directors, and (b) the school district engaged in sustained staff training and development activities. The limited success of federal change agent programs can be traced, in part, to uneven and often inadequate local leadership and staff development activities. Despite the importance of these critical factors, LEAs usually cannot justify, to their local constitutents, the allocation of district funds for purposes of improving middle-level management and conducting in-service development for teachers. Federal legislation, under Title IV C, that provided funding for local leadership training and staff development would also help legitimize these activities within

local school systems. Although there is no single "best" approach to leadership training and staff development activities, research suggests that the states should design awards to encourage: (1) regional arrangements where the less competitive districts in an area could draw on the skills of the stronger districts, and (2) the use of peers helping their counterparts (principals, teachers, middle-management, and superintendents) in other districts.